

CITY OF ROCKVILLE PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

September 7, 2000

SUBJECT:

Detailed Application CPD2000-0004H for
Comprehensive Planned Development
CPD1999-0004, Fallsgrove

Applicant: Fallsgrove Associates
c/o The Cox Companies
8381 Old Courthouse Road, #160
Vienna, VA 22182

Owner: Fallsgrove Associates

Date Filed: August 22, 2000

Location: A portion of the former Thomas Farm,
near the corner of Shady Grove Road
and Darnestown Road, generally described
as Phase I.



Proposed Area

REQUEST:

The applicant seeks detailed (final) approval for a Stormwater Management facility and proposed rough grading for a spur road at the intersection of Shady Grove Road and Darnestown Road. This application encompasses approximately 2.15 acres.

PREVIOUS RELATED ACTIONS:

- CPD99-0004, Concept Plan Application for Comprehensive Planned Development approved by the Mayor and Council, February 22, 2000.
- CPD2000-0004A, Detailed Application for Part I infrastructure and roads, approved by the Planning Commission, July 25, 2000.

ANALYSIS:

Background

On February 22, 2000, the Mayor and Council approved CPD99-0004, authorizing development on the former Thomas Farm site, now known as Fallsgrove. The approval authorized a total of 1,530 dwelling units, 150,000 square feet of commercial retail and 950,000 square feet of office/research and development space. A Comprehensive Planned Development is implemented through the

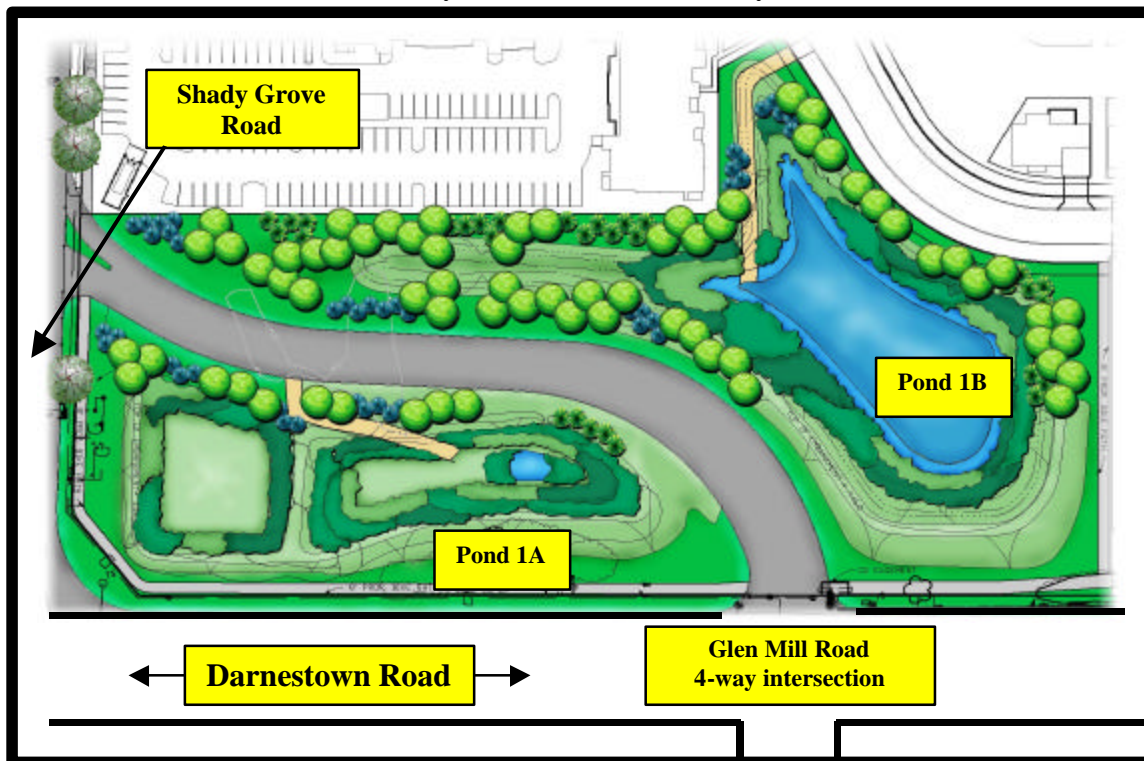
approval of individual detailed applications for all or part of a development as required in Section 25-656 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Property Description

Fallsgrove consists of approximately 254 acres bounded by Shady Grove Road, Darnestown Road, West Montgomery Avenue and Research Boulevard. The topography varies from rolling farmland on a majority of the site to an upland forest area near the intersection of Gude Drive and West Montgomery Avenue. The area covered by this application is relatively flat.

Proposal

The applicant seeks approval for a stormwater management (SWM) facility and rough grading for a proposed spur road at the intersection of Shady Grove Road and Darnestown Road. The proposed spur road will bisect the SWM facility, and will connect Shady Grove Road and Darnestown Road.



The connection to Darnestown Road will create a four-way intersection at Glen Mill Road. The spur road moves some of the turning movements from the existing Shady Grove Road and Darnestown Road intersection. In particular, vehicles travelling between Glen Mill Road or Darnestown Road and I-270 (via Shady Grove Road) will bypass the Shady Grove/Darnestown intersection. Because the spur road bisects the SWM facility, the proposed ponds for this facility are referenced as 1A and 1B. Pond 1A is between the spur road, Shady Grove Road and Darnestown Road. Pond 1B is on the eastern side of the spur road, and is adjacent to the proposed Madison Creek Road, which was approved through Detailed Application CPD2000-0004A.

Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (MCDPWT) has endorsed the spur road referenced in this application as being consistent with the goals and objectives of the 1993

Shady Grove Master Plan. Acceptance of this proposal by the County is referenced in the attached letter (Attachment 2). Various alternatives have been discussed for this intersection, including a grade-separated interchange and a double traffic circle.

On-going discussions between the City, County, and the Developer of Fallsgrove have led to this proposal, and it is considered the most appropriate option for current and future traffic levels through the year 2020. The road will be funded by the County and built by Fallsgrove. As such, this proposal will have the road built much faster than the County had envisioned, creating, in essence, a “bonus” road for the City and the County. However, because the road is a departure from previous proposals, the Montgomery County Planning Board must approve this design. The previously referenced letter from MCDPWT references support for the design, and urges Planning Board acceptance and approval of the spur road proposal.

The spur road proposal is located between SWM ponds 1A and 1B, which are needed to facilitate development of the first residential detailed application submittals on the Fallsgrove site. The location of the ponds and the spur road were identified on the approved Concept Plan as Exhibit 18, Land Use Concept Plan (Attachment 1) as a transportation and Stormwater Management dedication area. The spur road will be dedicated to the County in a rough graded condition, to be built in approximately 18 months by the County. Fallsgrove will do the actual construction of the spur road through a contract with the County. A condition relating to timing of the spur road construction is contained within the next section of this report. The ponds will be dedicated to the City of Rockville. The City will also maintain these SWM pond facilities.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval is recommended, subject to the following conditions:

1. Submission, for approval by the Chief of Planning, of eleven (11) copies of the site plan, revised according to Planning Commission Exhibit A.
2. Submission, for approval by the Department of Public Works (DPW), of the following detailed plans, studies and computations:
 - a. Detailed engineering plans and computations for review and approval from DPW.
3. Post bonds and obtain permits from DPW.
4. Obtain permits from MDE, SCS, and Montgomery County.
5. Submission, for the approval by the Parks Department, of a landscape plan that includes a location for an entrance to Rockville sign.
6. Design and construction of the spur road to be funded by Montgomery County, with construction taking place no later than the Wootton Parkway/Glen Mill Road re-alignment.

7. Design of the spur road (including lane configuration, alignment, and signal design) to be approved by Montgomery County DPW&T.
8. The Montgomery County Planning Board must approve the spur road concept. The spur road will be dedicated to the County. The SWM area will be dedicated to and owned by the City. The City will also maintain the SWM areas.

TRANSPORTATION

Traffic

A traffic study was done as part of the Concept Plan approval, and this application is in compliance with the approved Concept Plan. Mitigation of the traffic impacts were required as part of the Concept Plan. Mitigation measures include the construction of improvements to 12 intersections, construction of a transit center, payment of \$1.6 million for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures, and construction of on-site roads. This application is separate from the requirements of the CPD, and has no effect on any of the required traffic mitigation or TDM requirements of Falls Grove. The rough graded road will be dedicated to the County, with subsequent funding of the construction coming from the County through road club improvement funds from other adjacent development requirements. These funds were previously identified for improvements to Shady Grove Road and Darnestown Road. As previously referenced, the Montgomery County Planning Board must approve this design request.

Again, the City's Transportation Division has been involved with discussions and analysis of this project with the County and the Developer, and a memo outlining their position and analysis is attached for review (Attachment 3).

Parking

There will be no parking on the spur road.

Pedestrian Access and Bicycle Paths

All required sidewalks are shown, as well as sections of bicycle paths in proposed rights-of-way that are part of the approved Concept Plan. The sections of sidewalks and bicycle paths are consistent with the approved Concept Plan. The final locations of bike paths will be shown in subsequent detailed applications covering the perimeter of the site.

The Concept Plan shows bicycle and pedestrian paths converging at the intersection of Shady Grove Road and Darnestown Road. It has been decided that keeping this configuration, instead of creating bike lanes or sidewalks on the spur road, is preferable. Including paths or sidewalks on the spur road will require more dedication area, and could create a conflict with the grading in the area reserved for the SWM facility. In addition, moving the bike path from the intersection of Shady Grove and Darnestown could create a practical difficulty in connecting various bike trails to the Seneca trail further north on Darnestown Road. It is anticipated that a majority of bike traffic will use the Millennium Trail connection further south on Darnestown Road.

Transit

There are no significant transit related issues with this proposal.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Two SWM ponds, referred to as 1A and 1B are proposed within this application. These ponds, which will meet the State's new SWM guidelines, will serve residential development on the western portion of the Falls Grove site. The ponds have been sized accordingly, and are under detailed engineering review by DPW. The bisecting of the SWM facility by the proposed spur road will have no significant impact on the proper functioning of the SWM ponds 1A and 1B.

LANDSCAPING

The ponds and the accompanying spur road will be heavily landscaped to create an inviting and pleasing corner. Proposed landscaping is shown as Planning Commission Exhibit "B", but final approval of the detailed location of the landscaping shall be reviewed after the detailed engineering review is complete. It is anticipated that this final submittal will be part of the submittal of the signature set of drawings to the Planning Department.

Forest/Tree Preservation

There are no forestry issues related to this application.

Equipment Screening

No equipment is proposed with this application.

STAFF COMMENTS

Staff supports this application as a way to immediately mitigate traffic issues associated with burgeoning development in the Life Sciences area of Shady Grove. Staff further believes that the integration and coordination of the spur road with the SWM facility serves a dual function of providing immediate impact for traffic mitigation, as well as providing a suitable alternative to future traffic mitigation scenarios that have been created in this area. The Developer, while grading this spur for the County, is compelled to do so by the immediate need of the SWM area, not by any other requirement of the Concept Plan. In addition, construction of the spur road will have no impact on the requirements of the Concept Plan approval as it relates to traffic mitigation measures to be provided by the applicant.

This application is consistent with the approved Concept Plan, and staff recommends approval subject to the conditions listed earlier.

NOTIFICATION

Notices were sent to approximately 1,650 residences, businesses and association presidents. Some of the subdivisions include, but were not limited to, Glenora Hills, Rockshire, the Willows, Carter Hill, Watts Branch Meadows, Cambridge Heights, Ivy Woods and Flintledge Estates.

APPROVAL LIMITATIONS

Section 25-193(d) of the Zoning Ordinance requires that **construction or operation must commence within two (2) years of the date of this decision or application approval shall expire.** If the applicant can show just cause, a maximum of two (2) time extensions may be granted by the Planning Commission, each not to exceed one year. However, time extensions are not automatically approved, and sufficient detail and justification will be required in order for the Planning Commission to consider granting an extension.

CONCLUSION

Staff believes that this application is consistent with the approved Concept Plan approved by the Mayor and Council for this area of Fallsgrove. As a result, staff recommends approval of Detailed Application CPD2000-0004H for a SWM facility and a rough-graded spur road connection from Shady Grove Road to Darnestown Road.

Attachments